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NEWS RELEASE

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Zorinsky Lake Community Spring Clean-Up set for May 7

Omaha, Neb. – The public is invited to participate in a spring clean-up event at Zorinsky Lake May 7.

The Zorinsky Lake Community Spring Clean-Up will enable the greater Omaha community to assist in clearing debris and trash from around the lake in preparation for the refilling of the reservoir.

Beginning in late December, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began lowering Zorinsky Lake to 1092 feet msl in accordance with a multi-agency recommended plan of action to control zebra mussels. Any mussels exposed to the air were subject to drying out and or freezing, which is lethal.

Beginning in March, the multi-agency team conducted a survey of adult zebra mussels. The initial results of that survey appear to indicate the drawdown has been successful in controlling the zebra mussel population. Further testing for veligers, the larval form of zebra mussels, will be done in May and June throughout any standing water in the reservoir.

The current plans are to close the outflow gate on Zorinsky Lake in the fall. However, the multi-agency team is working diligently to complete the remaining tasks in an expeditious manner and may be able to close the gates as early as mid-to-late summer. The subsequent rebuilding of the fishery will follow.

The Zorinsky Lake Community Spring Clean-Up is a family friendly event hosted by the City of Omaha and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; it will begin at 8 a.m. with a free continental-style breakfast provided by local businesses.

Please note there has been a change in the starting location for the event. Volunteers should take the entrance road to the reservoir at the Zorinsky Lake Aquatic Center off 156th Street. Parking is available at the Aquatic Center as well as the road, itself, that leads to a loop with a playground, covered picnic areas and public restroom. Carpooling is encouraged. The staging location will be on the western side of the loop and clearly marked with a banner.

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Informational booths on zebra mussels will be on display. Representatives of the various agencies participating in the effort to control the invasive species will also be on hand to field questions from the public.

The actual cleanup will run from 9 to 11 a.m. and all necessary cleanup equipment will be provided. Volunteers will be assigned to teams to specifically designated areas to gather trash. Volunteers may be walking through a variety of terrain; please dress appropriately.

The City of Omaha has restricted access to the lake and lake bed, itself. Signs warning the public of the lake's closure have been posted at multiple locations throughout the park. Recreationists continue to have access to the trails, playground and ball fields.

"Safety is the number one priority of the multi-agency task force," said Jolene Hulsing of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "With the lake being lowered, there is currently a lot of mud surrounding the water that is remaining, so it is important for the public to stay off the mud and out of the lake."

Zorinsky Lake is owned by the Corps of Engineers and leased to the City of Omaha, who manages the lake and recreational facilities.

For questions regarding the the Zorinsky Lake Community Spring Clean-Up, please contact Amber Miller with the City of Omaha Parks and Recreation Office at (402) 444-5947.

For more information about zebra mussels and how you can assist in the effort to protect Nebraska's bodies of water, please visit:

- <http://www.100thmeridian.org/> - For boaters, anglers, and aquatic recreational users
- <http://snr.unl.edu/invasives/> - Nebraska Invasive Species Project
- <http://www.anstaskforce.gov/> - Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Task Force

Also, visit the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District, on Facebook or Twitter to stay updated on the progress of efforts to control the zebra mussels: www.facebook.com/OmahaUSACE or www.twitter.com/OmahaUSACE.

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